

NATURAL RESOURCES AND RECREATION

Agency 477

Department of Fish and Wildlife

Recommendation Summary

Dollars in Thousands

	Annual FTEs	General Fund State	Other Funds	Total Funds
2009-11 Expenditure Authority	1,385.9	75,600	252,244	327,844
Total Maintenance Level	1,439.9	82,569	257,652	340,221
Difference	54.0	6,969	5,408	12,377
Percent Change from Current Biennium	3.9%	9.2%	2.1%	3.8%
Performance Changes				
Puget Sound Federal Funds			18,000	18,000
Reduce Operation Costs for New Lands		(838)		(838)
Charge Fees for State Lands Access *	13.8	(450)	7,100	6,650
Extend Aquatic Invasives Fee *			138	138
Reduce Back-Office Functions	(5.7)	(1,046)		(1,046)
Transfer Enforcement to Fish and Wildlife #	5.1	115		115
Enforcement Interagency Agreement		(1,200)		(1,200)
Reduce Salmonid Recovery Technical Assistance	(1.2)	(200)		(200)
Eliminate Dangerous Wildlife Specialist	(1.0)	(210)		(210)
Reduce DFW Enforcement Officers	(2.0)	(500)		(500)
Transfer Forest Practices Hydraulic Projects	(.3)	(225)		(225)
Transfer Natural Heritage Program #	3.5	385	471	856
Natural Resources Consolidation #	(725.6)	(31,729)	(152,385)	(184,114)
Charge Fees for Hydraulic Permits *	(9.5)	(5,264)	3,769	(1,495)
Conduct Critical Asset Maintenance	1.0		500	500
Increase Hunting and Fishing License Fees *	5.5	(3,594)	5,643	2,049
Shift Funding for Rules Officer		(158)	158	
Reduce Winter Elk Feeding		(300)		(300)
Reduce Habitat Research		(82)		(82)
Reduce Statewide Habitat Coordination	(.4)	(63)		(63)
Eliminate Fish Passage Coordinator	(1.0)	(166)		(166)
Eliminate Major Projects Manager	(.7)	(138)		(138)
Eliminate Aquatic Education Activities	(2.3)	(442)		(442)
Reduce Fish Management Capabilities	(2.5)	(300)		(300)
Eliminate Remaining Full-Time Pilot		(148)		(148)
Absorb Higher Unemployment Costs		(376)		(376)
Reduce Technology Costs		(240)		(240)
Reduce Hatchery Operations	(.9)	(200)		(200)
Shift Funds for Eco-Region Planner		(186)	186	
Suspend Plan 1 Uniform COLA #		(823)	(1,951)	(2,774)
State Data Center Rate Increase		107	107	214
Subtotal	(724.2)	(48,271)	(118,264)	(166,535)
Total Proposed Budget	715.7	34,298	139,388	173,686
Difference	(670.2)	(41,302)	(112,856)	(154,158)

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	Annual FTEs	General Fund State	Other Funds	Total Funds
Percent Change from Current Biennium	(48.4)%	(54.6)%	(44.7)%	(47.0)%
Total Proposed Budget by Activity				
Agency Administration	82.3	9,594	18,985	28,579
Licensing	14.8	(83)	4,256	4,173
Manage Agency Facilities and Assets	7.6	303	2,465	2,768
Enforcement	73.7	6,109	11,902	18,011
Hydraulic Project Approvals	21.2	664	2,947	3,611
Ecosystem Restoration	14.8	1,268	10,629	11,897
Provide Sustainable Hunting and Wildlife Viewing Opportunities	29.2	(413)	6,742	6,329
Land Management	57.0	1,253	15,905	17,158
Protect and Recover Threatened and Endangered Wildlife	24.6	(335)	5,325	4,990
Fish Production for Sustainable Fisheries	141.0	7,125	24,781	31,906
Native Fish Recovery	127.8	4,013	20,738	24,751
Fisheries Management	95.0	2,444	12,170	14,614
Monitor and Control Aquatic Invasive Species	4.3	345	416	761
Habitat Conservation Technical Assistance	21.4	2,011	2,127	4,138
Total Proposed Budget	714.2	34,298	139,388	173,686

PERFORMANCE LEVEL CHANGE DESCRIPTIONS

Puget Sound Federal Funds

The Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) is entering into an agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to protect and restore marine and nearshore habitats of Puget Sound, which are critical to the Sound's health. Funding provided by the EPA will be distributed to state and local partners through a competitive process to fund projects that improve the effectiveness of existing regulatory and stewardship programs, implement protection and restoration projects, prevent or reduce the threats posed by invasive species and oil spills, and address ecosystem problems. (General Fund-Federal)

Reduce Operation Costs for New Lands

An ongoing reduction is made for the maintenance of approximately 28,000 acres of land recently acquired by the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Charge Fees for State Lands Access *

Agency request legislation is proposed by the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to establish a new Explore Washington Pass for admission to lands managed by DFW and DNR. The pass will generate revenue for DFW and DNR to manage recreation lands. Revenue will be distributed equally between DNR's Park Land Trust Revolving Account and DFW's State Wildlife Account. The amount authorized in the State Wildlife Account will allow DFW to maintain roads, trails, gates, fences, and signs. DFW will also direct additional resources towards safety management and enforcement on its lands. (General Fund-State, State Wildlife Account-State)

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Extend Aquatic Invasives Fee *

The Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) is responsible for all aquatic invasive species checkpoints and development of management plans in the state. The \$1.50 fee on watercraft registrations to fund these activities expires on June 30, 2012. Agency request legislation proposed by DFW and the Department of Ecology removes the sunset date. Funding is increased on an ongoing basis to match anticipated fee revenue. (Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Account-State)

Reduce Back-Office Functions

As part of the Department of Fish and Wildlife's 10 percent General Fund-State reductions, several back-office positions are eliminated: an accounting position, a position in the director's office, a receptionist, fleet manager, and an administrative assistant in the Habitat Program. Other cuts include reducing purchasing and contracts and eliminating vehicle replacement for the 2011-13 biennium. The \$128,000 vehicle replacement reduction is a one-time reduction while all other reductions are ongoing.

Transfer Enforcement to Fish and Wildlife #

Pursuant to executive request legislation consolidating natural resource agencies, funding and FTE staff are increased to reflect the transfer of the Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) eight law enforcement officers into the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) Enforcement Division, effective July 1, 2012. This will lead to greater enforcement presence on state trust lands and greater enforcement presence during hunting and fishing seasons. DNR and DFW will enter into an interagency agreement to reconcile payment of costs stemming from increased enforcement on state trust lands.

Enforcement Interagency Agreement

With the transfer of the Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) Law Enforcement Program to the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the agencies will enter into an interagency agreement whereby DNR will pay for costs stemming from increased enforcement on DNR-managed lands. Reduced General Fund-State expenditure authority in Fiscal Year 2013 will be replaced by ongoing funds from DNR as part of the interagency agreement.

Reduce Salmonid Recovery Technical Assistance

This reduction eliminates 10 percent of statewide technical assistance provided to nine local governments and 11 non-government organizations (Salmon Recovery Board, conservation districts, and volunteer groups). This will eliminate or slow salmon recovery efforts across the state. Local project sponsors' ability to secure funding for recovery work will also be reduced as the quality of applications may suffer due to the loss of expert biological input, making grant applications less competitive.

Eliminate Dangerous Wildlife Specialist

This reduction eliminates the dangerous wildlife specialist in western Washington, where the emphasis of the work is on education and proactive engagement with local communities. The ability for the Department of Fish and Wildlife to engage with local communities and stakeholders will significantly diminish as will the agency's ability to respond to complaints about bears and cougars.

Reduce DFW Enforcement Officers

Funding is reduced for fish and wildlife enforcement by 5 percent, resulting in the elimination of two officer positions.

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Transfer Forest Practices Hydraulic Projects

The Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will enter into an interagency agreement by July 1, 2012 in order to restructure the forest practices application to include requirements that protect fish habitat. The agreement will also include a process for how decisions are made on forest practices applications when an applicant's project impacts fish life and fish habitat. General Fund-State expenditure authority and FTEs are transferred to DNR on an ongoing basis for processing forest practices applications with Hydraulic Project Approval requirements. If an agreement cannot be reached by June 30, 2012, the amount transferred to DNR will revert to DFW.

Transfer Natural Heritage Program #

Pursuant to executive request legislation consolidating natural resource agencies, funding and FTE staff are increased to reflect the transfer of the Natural Heritage Program from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW), effective July 1, 2012. DNR and DFW will enter into an interagency agreement to reconcile payment of costs stemming from work on state trust lands. (General Fund-State, General Fund-Federal, General Fund-Private/Local)

Natural Resources Consolidation #

Pursuant to executive request legislation consolidating natural resource agencies, funding and FTE staff are decreased to reflect the transfer of the Department of Fish and Wildlife to the new Department of Conservation and Recreation, effective July 1, 2012. (General Fund-State, Various Other Accounts)

Charge Fees for Hydraulic Permits *

Hydraulic Project Approvals (HPAs) ensure that construction activities are protective of fish and shellfish resources of the state. Unlike most state permitting programs, HPAs are currently issued without charge to the recipient. Agency request legislation is proposed to charge fees for HPAs sufficient to replace 80 percent of the General Fund-State costs of administering the HPA program. Additionally, the legislation will streamline the permitting process and improve on-the-ground implementation of permit requirements, leading to a reduction in staffing levels. Finally, expenditure authority is shifted on an ongoing basis from the General Fund-State to the newly established HPA Account. (General Fund-State, Hydraulic Project Approval Account-State)

Conduct Critical Asset Maintenance

The maintenance budget for the Department of Fish and Wildlife's facilities is increased on an ongoing basis to partially reduce the estimated \$13.3 million deferred maintenance backlog, reduce future capital budget requests for repairs and replacement of assets that are unusable, create utility efficiencies, and provide safe facilities for staff and the public. (State Wildlife Account-State)

Increase Hunting and Fishing License Fees *

The Department of Fish and Wildlife's largest source of state funding, the State Wildlife Account, is facing a structural deficit due to the June 30, 2011 expiration of a temporary 10 percent surcharge on license fees instituted by the Legislature in 2009. Agency request legislation is proposed to increase most hunting and fishing license fees, create commercial fishing license application fees, and increase personalized license plate initial registration and renewal fees. Expenditure authority is shifted to reflect the transfer of existing recreational shellfish license revenue and recreational adult saltwater fishing license revenue from the General Fund to the State Wildlife Account. Additionally, new commercial license application fees will offset General Fund costs of \$1 million per biennium for issuing those licenses. (General Fund-State, State Wildlife Account-State)

Shift Funding for Rules Officer

The Rules Officer supports commissioned officers with the interpretation and application of fish and wildlife rules and laws. Funding for this position is shifted on an ongoing basis from General Fund-State to the Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Reward Account. (General Fund-State, Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Reward Account-State)

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Reduce Winter Elk Feeding

This one-time 50 percent reduction to the winter elk feeding budget will result in the continued closure of the West Valley or Tieton feeding site through the 2011-13 biennium. This site is adjacent to private land and orchards, and is currently fenced to keep elk out of the orchards. The loss of this winter feeding site increases the risk of elk damage to the private orchards.

Reduce Habitat Research

The Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) conducts ecological integrity and habitat research, and monitoring on DFW-owned lands. This one-time reduction eliminates funding for a project to improve forest habitats to benefit wildlife in the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area and reduces habitat research and monitoring activities on other DFW lands throughout the state.

Reduce Statewide Habitat Coordination

The Department of Fish and Wildlife is a co-leader with the Washington State Department of Transportation on the multi-entity Washington Wildlife Habitat Connectivity Working Group. This ongoing reduction in Fiscal Year 2013 eliminates funding for the biologist currently serving on this group. Loss of this position will reduce coordination among agencies and non-governmental organizations to maintain wildlife passage in transportation planning, climate change adaptation, and biodiversity conservation.

Eliminate Fish Passage Coordinator

The Department of Fish and Wildlife partners with the Recreation and Conservation Office and the Department of Natural Resources to assist small forest landowners in replacing fish passage barrier culverts at road crossings with fish passable structures. Funding is reduced on an ongoing basis for one of two positions, thereby increasing the time between project assessment and barrier replacement as well as the total number of projects reviewed for program suitability.

Eliminate Major Projects Manager

The Department of Fish and Wildlife's conservation planning technical teams are comprised of the Oil Spill Team, Major Projects Section, and Renewable Energy Section. This ongoing reduction eliminates the Major Projects Section Manager and merges remaining staff into the Renewable Energy Section. This will reduce the agency's ability to participate in the licensing of some energy projects. Future project participation will be prioritized based on potential impact to fish, wildlife, and habitat, with lowest-risk projects being dropped from staff workload.

Eliminate Aquatic Education Activities

Two aquatic education programs, Angler Education and Salmon in the Classroom, integrate strong messages about aquatic species, scientific inquiry, fish habitat, wetlands, estuaries and local stream protection, ethical use and resource conservation. As an ongoing reduction, these programs are eliminated.

Reduce Fish Management Capabilities

This ongoing reduction eliminates two fish and wildlife biologist positions and a part-time administrative support position. This reduction may cause a delay of one to two years in the completion of regional steelhead management plans. It may also result in lost fishing opportunities due to more conservative management of resident warmwater and trout species in certain lowland lakes. Reduced staffing will eliminate work to evaluate chinook and coho salmon release strategies from south Puget Sound hatcheries, and will also create a delay in the ability to respond to external inquiries and fish management concerns, reducing stakeholder satisfaction.

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Eliminate Remaining Full-Time Pilot

With reductions in aircraft owned and operated by state agencies, the Department of Fish and Wildlife will shift its remaining pilot position from full-time to intermittent status. Ongoing savings will be realized.

Absorb Higher Unemployment Costs

The Department of Fish and Wildlife uses hundreds of seasonal employees, primarily to assist fish hatcheries when fish are returning to or leaving the facilities and to monitor fish and wildlife populations. As a result of the economic downturn, these seasonal employees have not found work during the offseason, and have drawn unemployment. This has increased the agency's unemployment costs by 50 percent. The agency absorbed these higher costs in the current biennium and will continue to do so on a one-time basis during the 2011-13 biennium.

Reduce Technology Costs

Advances in server technology are making desktop computers unnecessary for many users. Rather than each workstation having a personal computer, "virtual" desktop machines can access program applications on servers. As an ongoing reduction, the Department of Fish and Wildlife will lower desktop lease costs by moving to server-based applications.

Reduce Hatchery Operations

The Department of Fish and Wildlife operates 80 hatcheries across Washington State. This reduction to hatchery operations will cut costs such as seasonal personnel, office supplies, and vehicle fuel.

Shift Funds for Eco-Region Planner

The Department of Fish and Wildlife is seeking grant funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to replace current state funding for an Eco-Regional Planner. This position provides guidance documents and electronic maps that help local governments identify critical areas for protection of fish and wildlife under the Growth Management Act and the Shoreline Management Act. Funding is shifted on an ongoing basis to reflect this change. (General Fund-State, General Fund-Federal)

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTIONS

Agency Administration

Administration includes setting policy direction and providing agency leadership, providing regional management, conducting strategic planning, monitoring performance, allocating resources and tracking revenue, providing human resource and accounting services, ensuring cost effective contracting and procurement, developing and maintaining information technology systems, responding to the Legislature, and supporting the Fish and Wildlife Commission. These functions are essential to the agency and allow it to achieve its mission. (Approximately \$17 million of Administration costs will move into programs during the 2011-13 Biennium as a result of recent program structure changes and decentralization agency revolving costs.)

Licensing

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) offers a variety of licenses for hunting, recreational and commercial fishing, and other activities. These licenses generate approximately \$40 million in revenue each year. This activity includes operating and maintaining the web based platform for dealer point of sale and internet sales, the Washington Interactive Licensing Database, assistance to 600 license dealers, revenue oversight, and sales and regulation support to 1 million license holders, 600 commercially licensed businesses, and 61,000 disability applicants. The activity's functions are self-supported through a user paid transaction fee as well as the license fees that WDFW collects.

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Manage Agency Facilities and Assets

This activity includes capital planning, design, construction, maintenance, project management, and maintenance of the department's physical assets. These functions are necessary to ensure the preservation of irreplaceable natural resources for future generations. Included in this activity is fish screen and fish way installation, inspection, and maintenance; hatchery upkeep and improvements; habitat restoration projects; dam and bridge safety inspections and maintenance; and facility managements. The activity supports staff and visitor safety and the preservation of public resources.

Enforcement

WDFW officers enforce the natural resource regulations that protect fish, shellfish, and wildlife population in order to provide sustainable commercial harvest opportunities. These officers ensure compliance with hunting and fishing regulations, respond to dangerous human/wildlife interactions, protect the public and resources on department and other public lands, check compliance with hydraulic project approval permits, issue citations for violations of federal, state, and local laws, and assist local law enforcement within their communities.

Hydraulic Project Approvals

The agency reviews approximately 4,500 proposed projects annually for work in or near the waters of the state (hydraulic projects) and sets conditions that adequately protect fish and their habitats. Thousands of construction and maintenance projects occur each year that could damage or destroy fish, shellfish, and their habitats. WDFW maintains and updates fish habitat and permit data to identify habitat value and to detect changes or trends. The agency reviews Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA) permit applications, works with applicants to help them plan their project in order to protect fish life, issues HPAs, and monitors both compliance with HPA conditions and permit effectiveness in protecting fish.

Ecosystem Restoration

The agency restores and enhances habitat, whether directly or through technical assistance or providing funding. WDFW conducts fish passage assessments and uses habitat data to identify restoration priorities. We improve fish passage at culverts and fish ladders on our own lands and assist others, including the Department of Transportation, local governments, and private landowners, with biological and engineering expertise to remove fish passage barriers. WDFW works with federal partners to help farmers install fish screens on irrigation water-diversion projects. We also provide habitat-restoration expertise and funding to public and private landowners for nearshore and estuary restoration, critical habitat for salmon transitioning between fresh and salt water.

Provide Sustainable Hunting and Wildlife Viewing Opportunities

The department manages to state's wildlife resources to ensure sustainable and healthy wildlife populations are available for consumptive and non-consumptive uses. WDFW develops carefully managed hunting seasons and regulations using the best available science and an extensive public participation process. The agency conducts wildlife population surveys and collects harvest information from hunters to assess the status of wildlife populations. That scientific data is used to establish hunting seasons, harvest limits, and allowable equipment so that hunters may have sustainable hunting opportunities.

The department works with local communities to develop and promote wildlife-viewing activities and festivals. The department also provides wildlife web cameras featuring bald eagles, salmon, owls, etc. on its website; maintains interpretive signs at select wildlife areas; and produces self-guiding pamphlets and birding trail maps.

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Land Management

WDFW manages 900,000 acres of land, including more than 650 water and land access sites. These lands provide essential habitat for fish and wildlife and provide fishing, sell fishing, hunting, wildlife viewing, and other conservation-based recreational opportunities for the public. Acquired land is often either critical habitat for threatened and endangered species, or critical habitat for sustaining game populations, such as winter range. Habitat conservation land management activities include habitat restoration, weed control, and preserving open space. To maintain or increase access, WDFW builds and maintains roads and basic facilities, including boat ramps, and installs signage. The agency also coordinates with adjacent landowners to maximize the conservation values of the landscape and to maintain boundary fences.

Protect and Recover Threatened and Endangered Wildlife

WDFW analyzes species population data to determine which wildlife species may need protection as endangered, threatened, or at risk of decline. The agency works extensively with other wildlife experts and stakeholders to develop plans that identify threats and define actions needed to recover protected species. Using management and recovery plan strategies, WDFW works to restore and enhance protected wildlife and their habitats. Specific examples include reestablishing western pond turtle populations and augmenting sharp-tailed grouse populations. The agency also obtains federal grants to develop species plans for conservation and recovery.

Fish Production for Sustainable Fisheries

The department operates 87 hatcheries for fish production that benefit commercial and recreational fisheries and fulfill obligations to maintain tribal usual and accustomed fishing rights. This activity includes the entire fish production cycle, raising fish from eggs until release age and then collecting more eggs upon their return. Before release, hatchery fish are marked so they can be readily identified. In Washington, dams have eliminated some salmon habitat and hatcheries are used to mitigate lost fish production. WDFW hatcheries currently provide 75 percent of the salmon caught in Puget Sound and 90 percent in the Columbia River. Trout and steelhead are also produced for recreational fishing.

Native Fish Recovery

A number of factors pose risks to native fish populations. These factors include degraded critical habitat and past fishery and hatchery practices. In response to these risk factors the department has developed new initiatives to protect native fish from harvest and help their populations recover. WDFW rears listed fish to augment their populations. The department authorizes fisheries that use alternative fishing gear in specific locations and times that allow salmon to be released unharmed. WDFW develops and implements management actions to protect and restore native fish populations. Data is collected on the abundance and productivity of stocks that enables an assessment to be made of whether or not habitat, harvest, and hatchery changes are having a positive effect. The agency evaluates and reforms hatcheries so that the risks to native salmon are minimized, and hatchery facilities do not interfere with native fish passage.

Fisheries Management

Fish and shellfish resources are assessed, monitored, and evaluated to ensure harvest and resource management actions are sustainable and based on sound science. To understand what fishery resources are available, WDFW staff conduct field investigations to count the number of juveniles migrating to saltwater and adults returning to freshwater, conduct test fisheries to verify abundance assumptions, and conduct shellfish population surveys to determine harvest levels. The agency develops and uses fish management harvest models that consider the annual variability of fish and shellfish abundance so it can maximize recreational and commercial opportunities while minimizing risks to wild salmon and steelhead. WDFW monitors fish and shellfish catch levels to ensure harvest levels are sustainable. To understand the life-cycle and movements of salmon migration (necessary to protect threatened native runs), the agency marks salmon, uses coded-wire tags, and analyzes population genetics. Selective fisheries are offered to provide increased harvest opportunity on hatchery fish while protecting wild populations and assisting salmon recovery. WDFW cooperatively manages fisheries with treaty tribes and neighboring states and countries, implementing laws, court orders, and international agreements. Knowledge of resource availability and behavior allows WDFW to maximize fishing opportunities.

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Monitor and Control Aquatic Invasive Species

To protect Washington's ecosystems and economy, WDFW monitors aquatic invasive species' pathways of introduction. The agency conducts targeted inspections of commercial and recreational boats entering the state and provide pet store with lists of prohibited species. Any vessel contaminated with an invasive species is required to undergo actions that will eliminate the species of concern. Since all boats cannot be inspected, public outreach and education is conducted to help boat owners identify invasive species, understand their harmful impacts, prevent their introduction, and know what to do if they find one. WDFW monitors high use lakes and the Columbia River to detect invasive species. Rapid response actions are conducted throughout the state to prevent the introduction of aquatic invasive species and controlling them once they have established a presence.

Habitat Conservation Technical Assistance

WDFW provides landscape scale planning and technical expertise to protect fish and wildlife habitat by anticipating the impacts human development has on habitat availability and quality. The agency maps habitat data and provides biological, engineering, and planning expertise and tools to other public agencies, tribes, Lead Entities, and non-governmental organizations to facilitate habitat conservation and restoration activities. These partners rely on the department's assistance to make informed conservation decisions in such matters as shoreline management, critical areas ordinances, and water resources management. The agency works with operators of hydroelectric dams, wind power, and other energy projects to avoid, mitigate, and compensate for effects on fish and wildlife. The agency also responds to oil spills in order to conserve fish, wildlife, and their habitats and assess habitat mitigation and compensation needs for natural resource damages resulting from spills.